



Contact: Phil Hysell, 540-552-1613 x2  
National Weather Service Blacksburg

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 19, 2011

## **NOAA'S NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE DECLARES FRANKLIN COUNTY STORMREADY**

Officials from NOAA's National Weather Service praised Franklin County for completing a set of rigorous warning preparedness criteria necessary to earn the distinction of being StormReady®.

"StormReady encourages communities to take a new, proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations and public awareness," said Phil Hysell Warning Coordination Meteorologist at the National Weather Service Weather Forecast Office in Blacksburg, VA. "StormReady arms communities with improved communication and safety skills needed to save lives and property – before and during the event."

The nationwide community preparedness program uses a grassroots approach to help communities develop plans to handle local severe weather and flooding threats. The program is voluntary and provides communities with clear-cut advice from a partnership between local National Weather Service forecast offices and state and local emergency managers. StormReady started in 1999 with seven communities in the Tulsa, Oklahoma area. There are now more than 1,750 StormReady communities across the country.

A recognition ceremony was held this afternoon during a County Board of Supervisors meeting at the Franklin County Government Center in Rocky Mount whereby, National Weather Service officials presented StormReady signs to County Board Chairman Charles Wagner. The StormReady recognition will be in effect for three years when Franklin County will go through a renewal process.

Every year, around 500 Americans lose their lives to severe weather and floods. More than 10,000 severe thunderstorms, 2,500 floods and 1,000 tornadoes impact the United States annually, and hurricanes are a threat to the Gulf and East Coasts. Potentially deadly weather can affect every person in the country. That's why NOAA's

National Weather Service developed the StormReady program.

To be recognized as StormReady, a community must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Have more than one way to receive severe weather forecasts and warnings and to alert the public;
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions;
- Promote the importance of public readiness through community seminars;
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training severe weather spotters and holding emergency exercises.

“The United States is the most severe weather prone region of the world. The mission of the National Weather Service is to reduce the loss of life and property from these storms, and StormReady will help us create better prepared communities throughout the country,” Phil Hysell said.

“Just like communities, families need to be storm ready by having an action plan for severe weather. Through StormReady, the National Weather Service plans to educate every American about what to do when severe weather strikes because it is ultimately each individual’s responsibility to protect him or herself,” Hysell said.

###

On the Web:

Franklin County, Virginia <http://www.franklincountyva.org>

NOAA’s National Weather Service in Blacksburg: <http://www.weather.gov/blacksburg>

NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards: <http://www.weather.gov/nwr>

NOAA’s StormReady program: <http://www.stormready.noaa.gov>

StormReady® is a registered trademark used by the National Weather Service.